



# WHOIS Update

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# Agenda:

- WHOIS Studies
- WHOIS Service Requirements Report

# Goals of WHOIS studies



- WHOIS policy has been debated for many years
- Many competing interests with valid viewpoints
- GNSO Council hopes that study data will provide objective, factual basis for future policy making
- Council identified several WHOIS study areas to test hypotheses that reflect key policy concerns
- Council asked staff to determine costs and feasibility of conducting those studies
- Staff used an RFP approach to do so

Study Area/Topic	Specific studies defined	Current status	Other Information
<p>1. WHOIS Misuse Studies</p> <p>Extent to which publicly displayed WHOIS data is misused</p>	<p>1. Experimental: register test domains and measure harmful messages resulting from misuse</p> <p>2. Descriptive: study misuse incidents reported by registrants, researchers/ law enforcement</p>	<p>Council decided in Sept 2010 to conduct this study.</p> <p>Cost: \$150,000</p> <p>Time estimate: 1 year</p> <p>Contract negotiations are underway. We hope to begin in March 2011.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can count and categorize harmful acts attributed to misuse and show data was probably not obtained from other sources</li> <li>▪ Some acts might be difficult to count</li> <li>▪ Cannot tie WHOIS queries to harmful acts, which makes it difficult to prove that reductions in misuse were caused by specific anti-harvesting measures</li> <li>▪ Difficult to assess whether misuse is “significant”</li> </ul>
<p>2. WHOIS Registrant Identification Study</p>	<p>1. Gather information about how business/commercial domain registrants are identified</p> <p>2. Correlate such identification with use of proxy/privacy services</p>	<p>5 RFP responses received. Staff analysis to Council on 23 March 2010.</p> <p>Cost: 150,000</p> <p>Time estimate: 1 year</p> <p>Pending decision by Council to proceed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can classify ownership and purpose of what appear to be commercial domains without clear registrant information, and measure how many were registered using a P/P service</li> <li>▪ Might provide insight on why some registrants are not clearly identified</li> <li>▪ Use of P/P services by businesses</li> </ul>
<p>3. WHOIS Privacy and Proxy “Abuse” Study</p>	<p>Compare a broad sample of Proxy and Privacy-registered domains associated with alleged harmful acts with overall frequency of Proxy and Privacy registrations</p>	<p>3 RFP responses received. Staff analysis to Council on 5 October 2010.</p> <p>Cost: 150,000</p> <p>Time estimate: &lt; 1 year</p> <p>Pending decision by Council to proceed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can sample many harmful acts to assess how often “bad actors” try to obscure identity in WHOIS</li> <li>▪ Compare bad actor P/P abuse rate to control sample <i>and</i> to alternatives like falsified WHOIS data, compromised machines, and free web hosting</li> <li>▪ Some kinds of acts not sampled due to irrelevance and/or difficulty</li> <li>▪ Cannot reliably filter out “false positive” reports</li> </ul>
<p>4. WHOIS Privacy and Proxy “Relay and Reveal” Study</p>	<p>Analyze relay and reveal requests sent for P/P-registered domains to explore and document how they are processed</p>	<p>RFP responses due Nov. 2010. No bids received. Staff recommends a pre-study survey to identify willing volunteers.</p> <p>Cost: \$60,000-\$80,000</p> <p>Time estimate: 4 mos.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May be difficult to find diverse set of participants</li> <li>▪ Likely concerns by Registrars, Law Enforcement, privacy and business sensitivities</li> <li>▪ Others will have limits to the data they will disclose</li> <li>▪ Data collection aids may help</li> </ul>

# Inventory of WHOIS Service Requirements

San Francisco, CA



# Background

1. May 2009 -- The GNSO Council requested that Policy Staff **collect and organize a comprehensive set of requirements for the WHOIS service policy tools**. These requirements should **reflect** not only the **known deficiencies** in the current service but should **include any possible requirements** that may be needed to support various policy initiatives that have been suggested in the past.
2. The synthesis of requirements should be done in consultation with the SSAC, ALAC, GAC, the ccNSO and the GNSO and a **strawman proposal should be prepared** for these consultations.



# Goals & Non-goals

Collect and organize a set of **technical requirements for community consideration**:

- Current features identified as needing improvement
- Features to support various past policy proposals
- Features recommended by ICANN SOs, ACs, community

**NOT** gathering policy requirements

**NOT** recommending policy



# Status of the report

- Released draft Report in March 2010, sent report to ALAC, SSAC, ASO, GNSO, CCNSO for input
- Received input from RySG (GNSO), ALAC, and a group of technical experts (SSAC)
- Incorporated comments and released Final Report on 29 July 2010





# Compilation includes:

- Mechanism to find authoritative Whois servers
- Structured queries
- Standardized set of query capabilities
- Well-defined schema for replies
- Standardized errors
- Quality of domain registration data
- Internationalization
- Security
- Thick vs. Thin WHOIS
- Registrar abuse point of contact



# General Comments

- ALAC: The At-Large **supports all the requirements** expressed in the document, and believes there is a consensus in the community on these.
- RySG: “expresses appreciation for what we believe is very constructive report. We believe that it provides an **excellent basis for additional definition of WHOIS** service requirements for the future.”



# Comments on Next Steps

“we recommend that any **standards work** that may be needed **be identified** and **steps taken to initiate** the any needed **standards development work** as soon as possible so as to avoid possible delays later when additional WHOIS policy work may occur” (RySG)



# Comments on Next Steps

“we recommend the community **discuss what services / protocols** would satisfy these requirements and how **to move forward to make these changes.**”

(Technical experts from SSAC)

“The At-Large would like to see a clear **roadmap and a timeline with milestones for the implementation of** the above requirements.” (ALAC)



# For more information

- On WHOIS studies:  
<http://gns0.icann.org/issues/whois/>
- On the Technical Evolution Discussion:  
<https://community.icann.org/display/TEwhoisService/Technical+Evolution+of+WHOIS+service+wiki+page>

# Questions?

# Thank You!